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ABSTRACT

The Quo Vadis School of Nursing is designed and operated for women between the ages of 30 and 50 years. It offers a two-year program which prepares candidates to write the registration examinations of the College of Nurses of Ontario and to qualify as professional registered nurses. (CK)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Second Chances For Mature Women

ED050329

Report of a talk-in with the Quo Vadis School of Nursing
March 3, 1971

Sponsored by
Department of Adult Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

AC 000 311

The Quo Vadis School of Nursing offers a two-year program which prepares candidates to write the registration examinations of the College of Nurses of Ontario and to qualify as professional Registered Nurses.

The School is independent and non-sectarian, with authority and responsibility vested in a Board of Directors. It is financially supported by the Ontario Hospital Services Commission.

The unique feature of the School is its policy of accepting only mature students--those who are over thirty and under fifty years of age--who have academic qualifications for admission to schools of nursing in Ontario, who have satisfied an Admissions Committee that they are personally suitable, and who have made adequate plans to undertake the program.[1]

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[1] Catherine D. McLean and Rex A. Lucas, Nurses Come Lately: The First Five Years of the Quo Vadis School of Nursing (Etobicoke, Ontario: The Quo Vadis School of Nursing, 1970), p. iv.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

2 THE QUO VADIS SCHOOL OF NURSING:
A RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE OF THE TIME/*Catherine D. McLean*

5 THE QUO VADIS FILM

6 TEACHING AND LEARNING AT QUO VADIS TODAY/*Margaret Mackenzie*

9 MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM HOME AND WORK
TO QUO VADIS/*Constance Price*

10 A VIEW FROM THE SENIOR YEAR/*Charmian McCullough*

12 WHAT THE QUO VADIS EXPERIENCE HAS TO SAY
TO NURSING EDUCATION/*M. Josephine Flaherty*

15 WHAT THE QUO VADIS EXPERIENCE HAS TO SAY
TO ADULT EDUCATION/*Margaret MacKenzie*

18 ISSUES IN DISCUSSION

25 POSTSCRIPT/*Marion Royce*

27 APPENDIX A: THE PARTICIPANTS

INTRODUCTION

Since its founding in 1964, the Quo Vadis School of Nursing has become widely known as the only school of nursing in the world designed and operated for women between the ages of 30 and 50 years. The character and needs of this unusual student body have led the School to adopt a distinctive form of life and teaching, but one which at the same time conforms to the standards of the Ontario College of Nurses and the needs of the nursing profession as a whole.

Believing that the experience of "Quo Vadis" is of wide interest and importance to the field of adult education, the Department of Adult Education of the Ontario Institute of Education sponsored a one-day "Talk-In" on the subject. Its purpose was to review the educational experience of Quo Vadis and to evaluate its implications for the continuing education and employment of women. Participants included members of the Board of Directors of the School, staff, and student body; representatives of the nursing profession and the Ontario Hospital Service Commission; adult educators from other agencies and institutions; and individuals interested in the subject area.

During the morning attention was focused on the School itself--the whys and wherefores of its beginnings and the experience of teaching and learning it has made possible. (A documentary film made in 1970 by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the program "Take Thirty," supplemented the discussion.) A group luncheon gave participants i impressions further and bec one another. The afternoon to broader implications of rience, in particular, what nursing education, to adul and to the continuing educa women.

This report is in no sense the colloquium. Rather it highlight salient issues o emerged during the day. W mulate further evaluative the field of adult educati related to the continuing ment of women in today's s

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luncheon gave participants opportunity to share impressions further and become acquainted with one another. The afternoon session was devoted to broader implications of the Quo Vadis experience, in particular, what "it has to say" to nursing education, to adult education in general, and to the continuing education and employment of women.

This report is in no sense a *procès-verbal* of the colloquium. Rather it has been designed to highlight salient issues of adult learning that emerged during the day. We hope that it may stimulate further evaluative study and research in the field of adult education, particularly as related to the continuing education and employment of women in today's society.

Marion Royce
Christopher Wilson

THE QUO VADIS SCHOOL OF NURSING: A RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE OF THE TIME

These notes are from the paper presented by Miss Catherine D. McLean, who as secretary to the planning committee for the School and coordinator of research during the first five years of its existence has contributed uniquely to its life and work.

Chronology

The School was a direct, if partly unrelated and fortuitous, outcome of a selfstudy of the problems of nursing education by the Ontario Catholic Hospitals, undertaken in October 1962. The "idea" of such a school came in March of 1963, and the planning committee was set up in September of that year. The Director was hired in February 1964; the first class started in September 1964 and graduated in the fall of 1966.

Climate of the time

The first suggestion of the school was a facetious one which I made rather casually during a discussion of the probable immaturity of the average nursing student after only a two-year rather than a three-year nursing program. It is historically and otherwise interesting that I was the only one who heard the suggestion. Why? Primarily, I suppose because I was one of the few persons involved in the study who was not a nurse, or related to nursing in anything but a temporary way, and certainly the Quo Vadis School was not an answer to the immediate problems which the nurse educator

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More importantly, perhaps, during my immediately previous working experience I had become increasingly aware:

(a) of trends in adult education
(b) of the changing needs of women.

My quite subjective reaction that an institution such as Quo Vadis was needed happened to be a correct interpretation of the climate of the times. (I doubt, for example, that it could have happened five years previously, or maybe even two or three years previously.) That it *was* a correct interpretation was amply demonstrated by the fact that it was relatively easy to get the School started, in spite of the fact that, at that particular time, it was "technically" impossible to start a new school of nursing.

In addition, however, to this obviously favorable climate, there were a number of fortuitous circumstances of inestimable importance--in other words, an element of serendipity. The most important of these probably was the interest and support of the Quo Vadis Project participants and a number of interested individuals; the availability of Margaret Mackenzie as Director, and a nucleus of able and devoted staff members, plus the research contributions of Dr. R.A. Lucas of the Department of Sociology of the University of Toronto, who was consultant to the research program. The role played by the

first students should also be emphasized. The School was the outcome of the support and work of all these and many others.

Assumptions and expectations

These were many. At first they were general and unspecified but as we went on they were spelled out, examined, and specified in more detail. They included:

1. The presumed presence in and around Metro of a sufficient number of adult women who would be interested in becoming nurses if a program were specifically designed for them. At first we thought merely of such things as a program taking place Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., non-residential, and using something we vaguely called "adult education teaching methods."

2. The expectation that students would have to be carefully selected and that the program design would need to be flexible and capable of adjustment in the light of experience.

3. The expectation that most applicants would probably be married women, probably with grown children,who would be looking for a way of occupying increasingly free time.

4. We expected some problems with formal nursing education primarily because the two-year program was not well accepted; and we knew that the program itself would have to be an excellent one, for that if no other reason.

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As a result of these assumptions and expectations, we agreed among other things:

1. That the selection of students should be based on a combination of psychological testing and interviews.

2. That some kind of counseling would have to be an ongoing service; that this should probably be both individual and group counseling.

3. That everything we did should be documented so that some research could be carried out and the program revised on the basis of its results.

4. That we would need to explore with adult education specialists the ways in which we could use adult education methods. (To this latter end we had a one-day meeting with Alan Thomas and Isabel Wilson of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, and tried consistently to apply the results of what we had learned.)

Actual experience

In retrospect it seems that most of our expectations were justified, as was the planning based on those expectations as they were transmitted into policy and practice. There were, however, a few surprises. We did not expect that the interest would be as high as it was and is; that the applicants would be so remarkably able; nor that, because of their disproportionate lack of confidence, they would have as difficult a time adjusting to the program as, in fact, they did.

This difficulty of adjustment was a real problem during the first two years and determined the direction of the research.

> The situation at the time was that although the students did well academically and very well in the practical field, several unexpected patterns of behaviour emerged. Classroom discipline was difficult to maintian; relationships between students and between staff and students were characterized by mutual irritability. Students were discouraged and many were near exhaustion, and the demands of many for assurance seemed insatiable.[1]

The study done by Dr. Lucas did a great deal to help us to understand the reasons for it and to adapt the program accordingly.

The heart of the problem lay in the change of role: "...these middle aged women had carried on their previous roles within a set of expectations which had been taken so much for granted that they became explicit only when the women's roles were drastically changed."[2]

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[1] Nurses Come Lately: The First Five Years of the Quo Vadis School of Nursing, p. 11.

[2] Ibid.

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Another unexpected development--one which probably still requires further study--was that of the difficult adjustment of staff members. In retrospect, it seems we should have studied this aspect more thoroughly and also have done more to help resolve it.

THE QUO VADIS FILM

Regarding the documentary film made by the CBC for its program "Take Thirty," Miss McLean remarked:

> *It is presented as something of a success story, making it all look too easy.*

Then, significantly, she added:

> *Maybe that is the best claim that the School has to being truly professional --the performance of a real "pro" usually does not convey the "cost" of becoming a "pro"--to the person herself or her teachers, or all those who made it possible.*

TEACHING AND LEARNING AT QUO VADIS TODAY

Margaret Mackenzie
Director, Quo Vadis School of Nursing

For our purposes today I propose to make some statements with which you may agree or dissent, but which I hope will lead to discussion. At Quo Vadis we have frequently discussed the subject of what makes teaching at this school different from other schools of nursing. We have difficulty in spelling it out, but it is different. I believe the basic principles of learning and teaching apply at all ages, but the application of the principles is the basis for these differences, for example:

1. Motivation. Whatever the basic motivation--and to be realistic, being of service to others is the idealistic motive --there are many others far more mundane, as improving the financial status. But regardless of motivation, the adult has chosen, or selected, this particular field. Having made this decision, she is committed. We do not have to encourage or persuade our students to study; rather, the reverse. We frequently encourage them to take a day off.

2. Methods. We use the lecture method to a very great extent. We are aware that current educational thought does not support this method to any degree. However, in support of our decision, I would make the following points, not in order of importance:

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(a) The students' need to be certain. The lecture material gives them guidelines of what is expected of them; a firm base from which independent study or research can, and does, branch out. That they continue to read texts on the job and enjoy it, would indicate that their interest remains high.

(b) The students' lack of time--actual, in terms of other commitments, and perceived in relation to their age, to the length of the program and their expectation of what a nurse should know.

(c) The students' anxiety. Almost within days of entering there is a tangible increase in anxiety and hostility. The program before them is not what they came to learn, which was nursing. Reading lists, references, and assignments only increase their anxiety and make their task appear impossible. They see themselves as the finished product but come with very little information about the means by which their goals are to be reached. On one hand, they expect to remember everything they read, but feel their ability to remember is

poor. The emphasis is changed gradually toward group and individual work.

(d) The students' conditioning in past experience as adults. Read and study, yes; but also hear, see, and try it out for yourself. In the early days, conflicting viewpoints in reference material are difficult for them to cope with. (The book is the expert and is, therefore, correct.) Let me illustrate from the course on Growth & Development. At first, because their children did things at times different from those stated as normal, their children are abnormal. Through frequent repetition of what is meant by "average" and "normal," they calm down. A part of this difficulty may be due to the variety of viewpoints to which they are subjected by the mass media, the changing values in our society, and the numberless topics on which experts expound. They can accept this going on around them, but what they may not be fully aware of is that, out of all this, they are forming opinions of their own. But when they zone in on a specific area, they feel everyone concerned is going to agree. We simply give them time to discover that the program is only a microcosm of life.

Also, I think we have to recognize that the greater part of their formal educational experience has not been recent. If the student is to move from the known to the unknown, does this apply to subject matter only, or would it apply to method as well? When graduates of new educational programs enter Quo Vadis, fifteen to twenty years from now, we may well have revised our methods.

3. Selection. Because of their need to succeed if they undertake the course, and because failure would prove everyone else right and the student wrong, I believe it is important in a full-time endeavor, that we use the tools available to us in determining the student's potential for success, rather than admit her and see her fail. From the beginning, therefore, we attempted to guide applicants whom we did not accept to courses we felt they could complete successfully.

4. Counseling and individual attention. From the initial inquiry onwards, the applicant must feel that she is considered as an individual. There are those who must see the Director, or who would rather come in and pick up an application form to assess the atmosphere. They are ambivalent about the action they are taking and need a warm reception. They are appreciative of prompt replies and answers to questions. Their

self-concepts and desires and hopes are at variance, so that even during the course they need supportive counseling.

5. Learning. I believe the adult needs confirmation that learning is taking place. Though their feelings are ambivalent in relation to evaluation, they want it. Self-evaluation is insufficient, because they are aware that others do not see us as we see ourselves. At the time of the evaluation, they may not accept it. The fact remains, however, that they remember it and later indicate it was validated by others, or that they had reconsidered the situation and discovered that they now manage the area better.

   Full-time courses such as ours are physically, emotionally, and financially costly to the student. She realizes she has to acquire a certain amount of basic information and develop particular skills, if she is to function effectively. She knows, either from personal experience or vicariously through her husband, that the work world sets minimum standards for performance. She pays too high a price for a bare minimum, nor is self-fulfillment achieved through minimum performance.

6. Flexibility. Jacques Barzun has stated that we should exercise care in not permitting the means to an end to become ends in themselves. At Quo Vadis we have tried to listen, and to hear what the students and graduates are saying to us.

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I am not suggesting we have achieved the ideal in our program, but I believe that the teacher, too, must have the freedom to choose the method of teaching which she prefers and feels is most suitable to a particular stage and area. Adult students are quick to perceive inconsistencies, anxiety, or incompetence in the teacher.

The manner in which a program is structured may meet the needs of either the administration, the teachers, or the students. However, it is unrealistic to try to meet the needs of one group to the exclusion of the other two, since all are involved.

MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM HOME AND WORK
TO QUO VADIS

Constance Price, Class of 1972

I moved from the Province of Quebec, after living there for 23 years, with the specific purpose of attending the Quo Vadis School of Nursing here in Toronto. Now I have been asked to talk to you on what it means to make the transition from home and work to Quo Vadis. I think it is relevant to discuss some of the personal changes the students of the Junior Year have gone through. I would like to "take you into our class" as it were, and I'll begin by giving you some statistics. There are 52 women in my year--together we have 129 children and 7 grandchildren. Forty-two are married, divorced, or widowed--like myself. Ten are career women. Our youngest child is Marc aged 18 months; the oldest is a 27-year-old married woman. For the housewives and mothers one of the most important things is the co-operation we receive from our husbands and children.

Some students have had to leave families behind on a temporary basis. There is for instance the wife of a farmer. On Sunday afternoons, she travels 150 miles to Toronto leaving behind her husband, five children--most of them grown up, and some 75 cows. She boards somewhere near the School during the week and travels back the 150 miles on Friday evening.

Some moved with their families; four Americans came up to attend the School. Thirteen of us in all moved into Toronto.

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Then there are the 10 business women. One of them was an assistant-producer for the CBC. Another was a stewardess-corporal attached to the 437 Squadron Air Transport Command of the Canadian Air Force. She flew with state visitors during the Expo Year. There is an ex-flight mechanic of the Royal Air Force. Another student was in the American forces in Japan and later worked for the U.S. Federal Government in Washington. Three Roman Catholic nuns bring with them experience in teaching and nursing in Indian missions in Northern Saskatchewan.

About one-fifth of the students were born outside Canada. In most cases their mother tongue is not English. Together we can speak nine different languages: French, German, Dutch, Russian, Latvian, Estonian, Finnish, Ukranian and Filipino.

We are a truly Canadian mosaic.

The first thing that happens is a telephone call or a letter to the School asking for information on the course. We all feel that the *personal care* we receive at this very initial point with Quo Vadis is terribly important.

Sometimes a long correspondence develops. It took two years before it was the strategic time in my life and in the lives of my children for me to move to Toronto.

Others had to take as many as five credit courses in order to prepare themselves academically. During this time of preparation personal concern on the part of the School is the thing. Many of us realize that it is this which keeps us encouraged. The flight mechanic, for example, made a desperate mistake in taking the wrong chemistry course; the encouragement given by the School's administrators helped her through this experience.

The psychological changes we have to make are many. Two main points have been pointed out to me by my classmates:

1. In our homes and secure jobs we were in full control. At home many of us call the shot, and our families "hop" to it in varying degrees. In Quo Vadis it is we who do the hopping.

2. We women in our age group are apt to live by primary reaction. We have to learn to swallow our reactions, to sift out what to voice in class and what to keep to ourselves to work out. I would like to use the example of a physiology class on the nervous system. The instructor talked at some length of roots of nerves and not looking at the blackboard I took copious notes spelling it out in "routes of nerves." When I looked up and discovered my mistakes with a gasp of amazement: "Any trouble Mrs. Price?" I explain: "Language trouble--roots-routes."

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Charmian McCullough

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A voice from behind me said irritatedly: "For goodness sake Constance leave your Dutch out of it --this course is hard enough in plain English-- don't confuse us!" She was right to correct me, you know! I need to learn to be quiet.

Now what makes us go back to school at the age between 30-50 years? What motivates us? Some of us have to work to support ourselves--the majority of us enter this course "to put more content into our lives." With our training we hope to be able to contribute in one form or another to the nursing profession and thus ultimately to Canada as a country.

A VIEW FROM THE SENIOR YEAR
Charmian McCullough, Class of 1971

As a senior at Quo Vadis, I am grateful to the School and the opportunity it has given me to become a nurse.

When I first considered going back into nursing I could have gone to a regular nursing school, but was advised to come to Quo Vadis instead.

There is something to be said for associating with one's peer group at any age particularly when the span between thirty and fifty is not as great somehow as that between eighteen and over thirty.

Many, if not all of us, have been independent, fairly competent people before entering the course.

Suddenly everything is brand new and we are the lowest on the totem pole. Although there is no pressure from the school to compete, we seem to compete with ourselves--expecting more of ourselves than we reasonably should. The technical part comes easily, particularly if one possesses a measure of manual dexterity. Studying can be another matter. Many times the cry is heard "I can read and study but can I retain it?" The single girls have an advantage here, because they do not have as many distractions from study as those of us with families. However, those same distractions can be supportive and serve as releases from tension.

As a result, we married women may not need as much help from our counselor as a single girl away from home and friends.

Gradually, as time passes and ward time increases, we do gain a measure of confidence. Also we get a pink band in our cap saying we are Seniors.

But further new experiences await us. The new class enters and some of us feel abandoned. Our instructors expect more from us whereas we still feel frustrated if our performance is not smooth and proficient. Graduation and the Registered Nurse examinations loom ominously near and we know we are not ready.

There is no doubt about this being a highly concentrated course. There is always another essay, exam, or assignment to prepare. The instructors are always ready and willing to offer help,encouragement, or just
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We are aware of some problems we will encounter, such as care for children, but there are others we couldn't foresee. Husbands and friends don't realize why we have to spend so much time in study and so social relations suffer. Traveling long distances every day becomes extremely wearisome. The husband of one of our classmates died at the end of her first year. Another's child developed diabetes; this necessitated earlier rising for her in order to see that he had his insulin and proper breakfast.

I tell you of these problems to emphasize how different our difficulties are from those of younger students. At Quo Vadis, these problems are dealt with and suitable allowances are made.

Nothing is ever perfect, so we are told, but Quo Vadis continually strives to help and educate its students in the best way possible.

WHAT THE QUO VADIS EXPERIENCE HAS TO SAY TO NURSING EDUCATION

M. Josephine Flaherty

The Quo Vadis experience has a great deal to say to nursing education and to education in general. In fact, I do not differentiate Quo Vadis experience from nursing education, although it has other aspects as well. Rather than make positive statements, therefore, I should like to raise a number of questions because we who are concerned with nursing education, with women, and with the field of adult education in general, must be pushed constantly to re-examine our assumptions. We began that process this morning and my hope is that by the end of this afternoon we shall have begun to re-examine more of our assumptions.

For many years nursing education was conducted on the assumption that the most important prerequisites for success of a student in nursing and for a nurse practitioner were a strong back, good feet, and certain measure of youth. There was concern of course that there not be too much youth, because that might be connoted as lack of maturity. On the other hand, the candidate was not to be too mature because everyone knew that you could not teach an old dog new tricks. The fact is that schools of nursing were slow to accept candidates who were over thirty. As well, certain other assumptions guided admission, policies and practices in schools of nursing: these included a belief, implicit if not explicit, that the celibate state was essential to success for nursing students. Marriage during training was not only frowned upon but forbidden, and many a student withdrew in order to be
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student withdrew in order to be married with no hope of ever being able to return. Only rarely were married students admitted to schools of nursing. Residence life was also thought to be necessary for nursing students and few, if any, were allowed to live outside the school residence. Evening, night and week-end work was considered essential, in large doses usually, and a Monday to Friday, week-ends free, daytime schedule was thought suitable only for pampered students in baccalaureate programs in university schools of nursing.

It was problems associated with shortages of nurses and their lack of retention in practice that prompted a group of creative educators to explore the possibility of providing nursing education for older women who wished to return to the work world or who wished to change careers; it was from this kind of activity, as you know, that the Quo Vadis School was born. However, I would like to emphasize that, at the same time, in other kinds of schools, many changes were taking place, and more and more schools were accepting mature students. Some of us have never taught in schools of nursing which did not have older students in the student body. My own experience has been that from my first days of teaching, in both diploma and university schools of nursing, I taught mature students, some of whom were old enough to be my mother. Thus I became attuned to having both kinds of students

together.

The Quo Vadis experience has been highly successful and will continue. This program along with the trends of the time and considerable lobbying by various groups, has prompted the nursing profession to modify its admission policies and practices to allow greater flexibility. There is still much work to be done, however, and it is along this line that I think the Quo Vadis experience has many things to say to nursing education. Perhaps it has raised more questions than it has provided answers, but I think these questions should open the door to increased investigation of certain of the assumptions upon which a number of us have been operating for some time. It is these assumptions that I would like to highlight.

First, I wonder if nursing education, in general, has looked honestly at selection procedures and admissions criteria other than the traditional academic qualifications. Universities in general and post-secondary institutions are examining some of these. The Quo Vadis School of Nursing had made a deliberate and persistent attempt to evaluate carefully its selection of applicants and has provided us with a body of data from which we can generate many more hypotheses and questions for examination. In the light of attrition rates in all schools of nursing, can we continue to say we can't afford a wide selection and testing program. Can schools of nursing in our society afford not to select students with greater care?

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Nursing education for many years has avoided answering questions which confront us by saying that there are not sufficient data upon which to base decisions. Quo Vadis, on the other hand, has given us hard data upon which they have based decisions and conclusions. At the same time, they have honestly admitted to limitations in the kind and amount of data they have, and have said "let's go further." Can nursing education, in general, say the same thing? Quo Vadis has identified and described a number of problems that students experience in adjusting to a new educational situation. My cautionary note is that we do not attribute these adjustment problems to older students only. Any student going into a new educational program is likely to face similar problems. I question, however, whether we admit that these problems exist, let alone examine them and try to deal with them. Why do we assume that the younger student doesn't have similar adjustment problems? We talk a lot about the problems of the older student, but because young people don't ask us many questions, we overlook the fact they have problems too. Do we ever put them in situations where they can ask questions, where they can describe their adjustment problems? If an older student has a sick child or if her husband has a problem of some kind, we are understanding. But how many of us ever excuse an 18-year-old student from ward duty because she had a fight with her boyfriend the night before?

The Quo Vadis School has been content to be different. It has not provided the same kind

of environment and educational experience that every other school of nursing has provided. It is a fair question whether other schools of nursing, community colleges, and universities, have been equally flexible in considering students as individuals and helping them work out a satisfying way of life. We hear that there have been some improvements in this respect. Actually, I believe that as more and more people find out how Quo Vadis operates, they will decide that they want to be associated with that kind of school.

Quo Vadis has attempted to define criteria for admission, for conduct of the program, for grading the students, and has had the courage to apply these criteria. There is a note in the Research Report that Quo Vadis, more than other schools, has rejected substantial numbers of students for particular factors such as, for example, personality factors. It may be, of course, that other schools have rejected students for the same reasons but haven't admitted to this principle of selection. Quo Vadis, on the other hand, has made known its criteria, and how they are applied. They have shown real courage and given leadership in these ways, and I'm sure it has not been easy.

In short, the Quo Vadis School has attempted to examine the nature and needs of the student population and to respond to these. It may well be that other schools are doing a lot more of this sort of thing than they are given credit for. Quo Vadis has identified certain particular factors associated with the retention and success

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of students, noting among these, for instance, the support of husband and family. I am wondering if the rest of nursing education has looked at the implications of such factors, and in what respects the problems of younger students are comparable. To what extent do support of community or support of peers affect retention and success among students in other schools of nursing? These are questions that I'd like to bring for discussion.

WHAT THE QUO VADIS EXPERIENCE HAS TO SAY TO ADULT EDUCATION

Margaret Mackenzie

I find myself confused and not at all sure what is covered by this term, Adult Education. I visualize it as a somewhat untidy tent-city, into which anyone who is not a child or teen-ager is welcomed, and even teen-agers may hang around the periphery. The city offers an endless variety of goodies, each carefully wrapped to disguise the contents, and labelled "Adult Education."

Truth in packaging

So long as the goodies are being picked up, we assume that people want them. But it is only when the package is opened that they know what it really contains. Like many a sample, it may not appear to be what they want, though they are not very clear about what it is they want. Even if the goodies are more desirable because they are disguised, I wonder how many potential learners we lose because they pick up packages which do not provide them with what they are seeking?

We hear of the thousands of adults who enroll in the various courses in September or October each year, in a variety of institutions, but we never hear how many complete them. Do we know how many re-register year after year, and whether they do so because they have a particular aim in view, or just to take a course, or to try something else? I would suggest a more definitive packaging system, each with a series of labels. The types of packages might come under three classifications.

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First, for those who may or may not have specific interests, but who seek through the various opportunities offered the adult, something more akin to a social or semi-entertainment level of education, where what is learned is almost incidental to other factors. Labelling would simply indicate areas of choice.

The second type of package, would be for those who are just shopping. They are not goal-oriented as yet. Perhaps they do not care for the first kind of offerings, or are proving something to themselves, or just want to explore. People in this category should understand the difference between credit and non-credit, and labels should clearly indicate which the package offers.

Offerings of the third type are the ones that would appeal to those who are considering education in a serious and determined manner, and possibly are even prepared to make extensive changes in their mode of life.

From our experience at Quo Vadis I believe that these three distinctive kinds of labelling are valid. One of our applicants was not eligible for admission; she needed an additional option. Miss McLean asked if she had ever taken a course in sewing, cooking, or something. The applicant remembered that she had, and after much searching found a "certificate" and was eligible. Another student had taken a number of Grade XIII subjects, written the tests, but not the exams,

and could not count them. Both had taken courses for interest at a time when it meant little to their future. But a little guidance would have helped the second.

Within the group of serious adult learners we can identify further differences in level of need. First, continuing education; by this I mean the individual who is building on previously learned and practiced knowledge and skills in the same or closely related spheres, which are personally satisfying. People see her as successful, and she views herself as broadening her knowledge, gaining further competence, and enhancing opportunities for success or promotion.

The original faculty of Quo Vadis had all attended university within the previous four years. I think we felt that this would assist us to understand the students. But we interpreted continuing education in terms of our own recent experiences. Whatever it was, I doubt that we were prepared for the actuality that confronted us after our students entered the School. The difference lay in the fact that our students were entering an entirely new field.

Second, the individual who *changes to a new area* does it because of personal dissatisfaction, or lack of self-fulfillment, or because her present skills are redundant or dead-ended. This is not related to success or the lack of it in her prior area of choice. She may feel guilty about her disaffection because it becomes obvious when she makes a change, or she may have a feeling of failure because other factors

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A somewhat different group entering a new field, are those who have no saleable skill and, for one reason or another, feel they must acquire one. This group is made up of individuals who married prior to establishing a work record. They come with many feelings of inadequacy as individuals. Though they have cared for a home and raised a family, society does not really indicate that they have accomplished anything worthwhile. If, in addition, the marriage has broken down, they have a strong sense of failure. This realization of incompetence is a new and probably terrifying experience. As one student said, "I never really felt I was incompetent before. I was young when I started both my previous jobs, and they were easy to learn, and I suppose it never occurred to me that I might not be good at them."

A third group of adult learners is made up of those completing secondary education. They have other problems. What is offered in adult education is not always at an accepted standard, or is not available in their area. This means the adult has to join the regular school group or undertake the study by correspondence. Only the hardiest and those who are strongly motivated toward a definite goal, can survive the regular school. Correspondence is painfully slow, and in certain areas, such as Science and Mathematics, frustrating and difficult.

Adulthood: monochrome or polychrome

I believe that in the over-all adult education field we need to look at the foregoing factors, and recognize the differences in students and their expectations. We need to be aware of the needs of the adult student as we are of students in the regular education streams.

Because in general education we have accepted developmental concepts in relation to the human young, we have had little difficulty in dividing the educational stream into five groups from nursery school to undergraduate university, a period of less than twenty years. Yet we take the 19-90 group, scramble them all together as though no growth and development had taken place and life experience had ended in the early twenties. Just because they are motivated to learn, is no reason for them to be grouped together, but rather the reverse.

At Quo Vadis, the magic age range is 30-50. Some of our graduates had tried other nursing programs within recent years, but found lack of common interests and values frustrating. I fully appreciate that adults may elect to attend courses primarily offered for those in the regular educational stream. But just as obviously, there are many adults who do not see themselves entering such programs. How else can we explain the daily commuters to Quo Vadis from Kitchener, Hamilton, Newmarket, and Bowmanville, and weekly commuters from Owen Sound, Belleville, and London?

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It is to this world of the adult, with a broad life experience, that I am addressing myself; the individual who is serious in seeking the opportunities presented through education, who is prepared to make extensive changes in her mode of life, and who wishes to do so through the acquisition of new knowledge and skill.

Dr. Peter Siegel of the Centre for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults at Boston University discussed with us once the horticultural concept of education. My interpretation of this is that the basic structure is the earth. Best results with plants are obtained with the right amounts of the proper ingredients at the correct time. Optimum development takes place with individualized concern.

ISSUES IN DISCUSSION

During the first colloquium there were two extended periods of discussion. The first was part of the morning session: "Teaching and learning at Quo Vadis," at which students and faculty from the School made short presentations. The afternoon session was covered under the title: "What the experience of Quo Vadis has to say." Three speakers related the experience to Adult Education, Nursing Education, and the Education and Employment of Women in Today's Society. Some of the papers from these two sessions are reproduced in this Report. Other presentations designed for less formal discussion have been incorporated into this section, along with the opinions expressed from the floor. The actual discussions did not necessarily follow the sequence in which the topics are treated below. Indeed both the size of the groups and the character and interrelation of the issues meant that we returned frequently to the questions that are arranged separately in this section.

Quo Vadis and the mature student of nursing

Had there been any mature nursing students prior to Quo Vadis? How had they fared? Where had they been enrolled?

These questions were asked several times during the day, as some participants confessed ignorance of the willingness of other schools of nursing to admit adults. There was no effort to maintain that Quo Vadis graduates were better than other graduates: several employers (Lakeshore Psychiatric, Scarborough General, and Queensway General Hospitals) spoke of them as *as* graduates from other diploma s
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eral Hospitals) spoke of them as being *as good as* graduates from other diploma schools of nursing. Similarly there was no proposal that Quo Vadis was the only road to professional preparation for mature students. A number of members of the profession were able to confirm that over the past ten years there had been some students in regular programs. The consensus seemed to be that the Quo Vadis School's contribution had been twofold: it had demonstrated that mature students could succeed in a vigorous schedule of nursing education, and had shown how an adult curriculum could be organized and made to succeed. Mature women who had always hankered after this vocational role had been given real encouragement. Since the founding of Quo Vadis the number of adult students in nursing schools had significantly increased. In one regional school that was represented, mature students make up about 10 percent of the total enrollment.

Although prior to Quo Vadis, other schools had admitted mature students, it had always been *on their terms*--that is, on the basis of a straight curriculum for 18-20 year olds. Quo Vadis, on the other hand, is set up to handle the special problems of mature students. The school's official attitude is one of flexibility which enables individuals to handle responsibly their personal and family obligations. Students are often surprised to find this element of personal concern in an educational institution. It is something that mature people on the whole do not expect. There is testimony to its meaning in the fact that large numbers of former students come back

to the School each year in order to keep in touch with staff members.

A counselor from another school for adults added a further comment:

> I am impressed by the evident faculty concern for students and their very real problems. It is very evident that students and staff at Quo Vadis are on the same "wave length." There seems to be a feeling of affectionate, mutual regard. Perhaps one reason for the development of these attitudes and feelings has been the importance given to counseling from the earliest day at Quo Vadis...

There is a parallel between the mature learning with the young and questions of the disposition of special students in the public schools. There is always debate about this. For example, should perceptually handicapped children study with the "normal" stream? Or should they study on their own because of their different needs? Perhaps the answer depends on the individual student.

Certainly a number of Quo Vadis students would succeed in other nursing schools. They would be able to get by without the kind of personal attention and identification provided at Quo Vadis. But there are others who say that they just could not have gone into a regular program. Maybe the difficulty that some Quo Vadis applicants have had in upgrading themselves to

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Grade XII has to do with the way in which they perceived other students perceiving them. A number of students found it very difficult enrolling in regular high school programs with 17- and 18-year olds. It seems to have been easier for them to obtain their Grade XII by other means. Perhaps part of the success of any particular student depends on the feeling of being able to identify with fellow students.

Although the motivation of mature students is higher than in the case of younger students, so is their anxiety level. For a variety of reasons, they feel they must not fail; much of this feeling is related to the image husband and children have of them. The younger student does not want to fail either, but her reasons are different, and she can bounce back more quickly.

Mature students have special needs. When adults are thrown into new situations in which they have no expertise or knowledge of what is really expected of them they seem to need the support which a structured situation often provides. They also fear that as adults they cannot keep up with the pace of the younger group. Research done by the School has identified this as an important factor in student selection.

It appears also that adults are immensely encouraged by early success. Quo Vadis was one of the first two-year programs in nursing education and candidates found the possibility of succeeding in a limited time an attractive feature.

The viability of part-time education for nursing

Although the School has not experienced a great demand for a part-time course for mature women, participants anticipated that many mothers would find this attractive. One career woman said: "Personally, I wish that people could take the Quo Vadis course on a part-time basis, in the evenings, for instance. If you ever did allow this, I would be one of your first students."

However, two significant arguments were heard against this idea. The first concerned the students' ability to complete the arduous and disciplined course. The fact that the Quo Vadis student is there for two years and it is a total commitment is very important in helping a student to go on when, at times, she feels depressed and is undergoing difficulties. In the second year the total commitment is augmented by other investments, such as personal relationships with students and faculty, the rewards of the work in general, and satisfactory completion of the first year; these also sustain the student. The question is whether this essential commitment would exist in a part-time situation. Is it easier to opt out in part-time situations? Does this partial commitment explain the lack of success reported in some retraining and adult education courses?

A more important argument was expressed quite strongly but not elaborated upon. One nursing educator put it this way: "Some fields lend themselves quite readily to part-time study, but I am very skeptical about part-time nursing education; nursing lends itself very poor
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Continuing professional education

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cation; nursing lends itself very poorly to part-time learning." There seemed to be some realization that professional preparation demanded the sort of commitment referred to earlier. This commitment was seen to refer to both the education and the practice of the professional. A participant who confessed to a certain reluctance to submitting himself for surgery to a surgeon who had had a part-time medical education expressed this point succinctly.

Continuing professional education

Attention was directed to the growing need for continuing professional education--further development of one's primary preparation. Quo Vadis experience, it was emphasized, is "second chance" or "second career" continuing education rather than continuing education as generally thought of in relation to nursing or other professions. The School has given people a chance of basic preparation in a professional field, but there is, also, a professional person's need for continual development, continual upgrading, a continual meeting of challenge.

In the field of nursing there is always going to be a need for this type of continuing nursing education. Other professions such as teaching and social work are increasingly aware of a similar need for upgrading opportunities. Whose responsibility is it to develop this aspect of nursing education? Is it to be left to the College of Nurses or to an anonymous public?

Might the Quo Vadis School, which has had unique experience in dealing with mature students, eventually change its focus in order to provide this kind of continuing education? Could Quo Vadis operate in a technical capacity to this end? Might the primary preparation which it now gives be extended into the continuing professional education that every Quo Vadis graduate will need in her professional life? Can Quo Vadis, having been successful in its present role, be moved into other areas of nursing? What aspects of its experience are portable?

Responding to this query, another participant agreed that there were specific things about Quo Vadis that would make it a good site for continuing professional education and, while avoiding a categorical answer, remarked: "I believe that society ought to be organized according to what unites human beings rather than what divides them, and therefore that adult education should be organized according to similarities in the educational process rather than according to differences. I lean toward associating continuing education with basic education and including students from various age groups. The educational process should certainly be supreme, and students should have individual consideration, but I would like to see young people, not so young people, beginning people and experienced people together with various levels of education going on in the same place."

Others in the group had found from experience both as educators and as students that people over 35 tended to feel more at home with people of their own age group and
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of their own age group and were therefore more responsive to continuing professional education opportunities when they could be with their own contemporaries.

At what points do we confront the challenge to change?

Special programs for mature women

Quo Vadis School of Nursing came about because it was appropriate at that time. A lot has happened since then. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women is being asked whether something special should be provided for those who are being discriminated against. A highly defensible answer is yes--for negroes, for women, for adults, and so on. Nursing was a natural choice for a Quo Vadis School. It is a discrete profession. One could dream of a Quo Vadis School for counselors but who knows what a counselor is? Nursing has a clear and accepted licensing procedure. The Registered Nurse's Certificate is universally recognized. There seem to be insurmountable obstacles to starting anything similar in social work or teaching.

Other participants indicated that there were signs of change even here. Some universities are offering Bachelor's degrees in social work and at Ryerson, a diploma course in social work can now be taken part time. But what value is a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work when in professional circles the demand is for an MSW in any position involving responsibility? A director of counseling provided her answer: "Yes, but it's

up to us! I have a counseling service with a staff of four: two people have Master's degrees and two have no degrees. They work together just beautifully. I know that people are always demanding higher standards, but it is up to us to be prepared to employ people on their merits and recognize them as full professionals on the basis of what they do."

Other women in search of second careers

The Quo Vadis School has been a clearinghouse for women looking to second careers. A considerable number apply to the School just because it is a school for adults and not because of an interest in nursing. Such people are referred to programs more appropriate to their particular interests. One example cited was of a woman whose real ambition was to become a librarian but who was afraid she was too old for training in that field. Quo Vadis got in touch with the School of Library Science, found out that they do accept mature students and told them to expect her that day.

About four years ago the Women's Bureau of the Ontario Department of Labor started a counseling service for mature women. Results from the first three years indicate a gradual but steady decline in the ages of the women who seek counseling. In its first year, 1967, the average age was between 40 and 45, a year later about 40, and in 1969 about 35. Women used to wait until their children were in high school before applying for retraining or thinking about a program such as Quo Vadis. The trend increasingly is for them to look ahead while they are tied down at home with young children and

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Women and part-time work

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Women and part-time work

"Women starting back to work do not want to go straight into full-time work either. Often they are thankful to begin at two days a week and then, over the next months to two years, build up to full-time. Quo Vadis has had to face the same issue with its applicants. Often they had been isolated and sheltered for some time. When they started back to work they found they lacked confidence. At the same time they became the butt of criticism for returning to work. The School was concerned that these people should not be totally overwhelmed by its program, if admitted immediately, and generally counseled them to take part-time work for a year before they entered the School."

It was clear that there were two distinct sides to this question of part-time employment. As one person put it: "Part-time employees have to realize that they pay a cost in working only part-time, in that they are not integral to the situation and cannot feel the same measure of identification or commitment as full-time people."

Although Nursing Service has been very sympathetic to staff who can offer only part-time work, a nurse cannot *start* by working part-time. She

must be ready to function at the level of (nursing) team leader and be able to give up-to-date patient care. Adequate relief nursing is based on a period of full-time nursing in the past. Standard of patient care is one issue, another is continuity: "Already our patient care is hopelessly fragmented and having recently been a 'consumer,' I can say that it really matters to patients that they know the people who are looking after them."

On the other side of the ledger are a number of successful programs in other fields of work that have been designed especially for part-time people. Nursery school teachers have doubled up to share one class, with one teacher working mornings and another--her partner--in the afternoons. It was also noted that part-time workers on the whole have good work records. Some surveys in the United States indicate that part-time workers work more efficiently when on the job than full-time people, who on an average work only three-quarters of their full day.

It was suggested that part-time people suffer from discriminatory attitudes in the labor market. If we cannot combat this problem we stand to lose in two ways. First, we are neglecting very real resources, when we neglect people who can only offer part-time work. The other loss is the stagnation of spirit that occurs in the woman herself who retires from active work to the chores and rounds of a household. We must look to women in society to be sensitive to occasions when a part-time person can appropriately be employed. If we are able to help married women continue in work and keep their skills, they will not need families grown, they retur

The dilemma of the woman's in the labor force

"We should recognize that thing for adult or mature as such. Nursing is tradi woman's profession. How fa would have got if they had the 20 to 40 age group for *female* architects. Not to restricted nature of women today's discrimination pro provide training for matur ally masculine fields of w

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The dilemma of the woman's position in the labor force

"We should recognize that Quo Vadis has done something for adult or mature students *not* for women as such. Nursing is traditionally accepted as a woman's profession. How far do you think people would have got if they had suggested a school for the 20 to 40 age group for *female* physicians or *female* architects. Not to first base! It is the restricted nature of women's employment that is today's discrimination problem." To attempt to provide training for mature women in traditionally masculine fields of work would be futile.

Other ways have to be devised to enable women to have a voice--a share--in such professions. A group in the United States has initiated an effective method to this end. They have organized a professional women's caucus--an association with the express purpose of advancing the status and welfare of women in the professions. Instead of setting up separate professional organizations for women, their strategy has been to organize a women's caucus within the total professional association, be it of doctors, architects, etc.--to give expression to the needs and interests of women members.

There was evident conviction that married women need special consideration, since in our society, they are really carrying a double load. A Director of Nursing gave a good example of this. She said, "When I started as Director, I

remember mentioning that someone was off ill, and one of my staff said 'Oh she's not sick, it's her boy.' So I asked what would happen if she tried to get time off to look after him instead of reporting herself as sick. I was told that she would lose the day's pay. There is obviously something wrong with that sort of system." The pattern of work preferred and adhered to in our society is one based on the traditional male role. There is need for a more flexible and capacious attitude toward the discontinuities in a woman's life.

POSTSCRIPT

Marion Royce

A day's discussion of the life and work of the Quo Vadis School of Nursing has served to highlight the cost, and no less the rewards, of becoming a professional in middle life. The candidate, the institution itself, and all those associated with it invest heavily in the process.

Quo Vadis has been particularly aware of the difficulties a mature person faces in undertaking the role of student along with other more traditional adult responsibilities, which in most cases cannot be wholly relinquished. At the same time the School's acceptance of the wholeness of life has enabled highly motivated individuals to combine such continuing responsibilities, with full-time study. As a result its students have found a new sense of identity. "My children no longer regard me as just another household appliance," remarks one woman. Another speaks of how the Quo Vadis experience has changed her whole outlook on life, "even," says she, "my choice of television programs."

The availability of counseling from the point of the initial interview throughout the entire two-year period of professional preparation and even after graduation provides continuing support for the individual student. At the same time the experience in counseling has enabled the School to acquire specific knowledge of factors that underlie the problems of the mature student.

The Quo Vadis experience has important implications also for the changing life styles of women

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and, indeed, of increasing numbers of men. Despite prevalent acceptance of the traditional career pattern of the male as the norm for our society,the Quo Vadis School, with its promise of a second career for women, has built upon the discontinuities in most women's lives and given credence to a female pattern of career, one no less worthy of accommodation than the male pattern. Indeed, it may be asked whether the so-called male pattern is still viable since men, more and more frequently, choose, or are obliged, to change careers in middle life. They, therefore, as well as women, have need to return to formal study in preparation for a new phase of life.

That the creative achievements of the Quo Vadis School stem in large part from the timeliness of its conception is beyond dispute. To consider in retrospect the experience of so dynamic an institution is, therefore, to raise questions about its meaning for areas of education yet to be pioneered.

There is, for instance, the question of how to evaluate the individual experience of adult candidates for further education and professional preparation. Despite lip service to the need for greater flexibility in admission requirements for adults, institutions and agencies have yet to find satisfactory methods of evaluating the educational level and life experience of the mature student. Experimentation and research in this area call for high priority in relation

to all areas of the continuing education of adults. Might not continuing documentation of the experience of the Quo Vadis School in dealing with mature candidates contribute to viable solutions of the problem?

Inevitably, questions also arise with respect to methods of teaching. The Quo Vadis School, for reasons that have been thoroughly rationalized, has elected the predominant use of the lecture method. With a planned period of preliminary experience in learning how to learn, followed by the guidance of a well designed syllabus and discriminating advice regarding reading, might students not profit by greater scope in finding out things for themselves rather than depending upon the reassuring support of the lecture method?

Again,has the last word been spoken with respect to part-time education in nursing as a further extension of flexibility in combining study with other responsibilities?

In the course of the day's discussion, questions naturally arose regarding the continuing need for a school such as Quo Vadis. Other schools of nursing are taking cognizance of the needs and possibilities of the mature student. Inherent in the Quo Vadis experience are unerring respect for individual needs and the mutual support of a small homogeneous community. Are there not ways in which these qualities might be incorporated effectively into the life and work of other schools? There can be no doubt that such qualities in the learning environment are fully

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This subject of the need for a Quo Vadis type of institution was broached also in the context of "compensatory or special treatment for women,"[1] an issue that divided members of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. To discuss this controversial subject in any depth is beyond the scope of this brief review of the Quo Vadis experience. However, the fact of it having been raised, does underline the urgency for research and experimentation to bring practical educational solutions to the position of women in today's society.

During the day, also, participants in the "talk-in" were asked to consider a possible role for the Quo Vadis School in continuing education for members of the nursing profession. The suggested alternative of interdisciplinary continuing professional education gave this question another perspective that urgently requires experimentation and research.

So it is that a lively, meaningful educational experiment continues to open up further fields of enquiry and endeavor for committed individuals and the institutions that help them to attain professional proficiency. Whatever the future of the Quo Vadis School, its foundations have been well and truly laid in giving its students "the magnificent responsibility and splendid ambition of becoming their own selves." (Teilhard de Chardin).

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[1](Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970), p. 434.

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